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**BISHOP, SCHUMER, CLINTON, LEVY PRAISE
BNL CLEANUP PROPOSALS**

Lab to work with Community to Clean Reactor, Remove Mercury from Peconic River

Upton, NY-- Congressman Tim Bishop, Senators Charles Schumer and Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy today issued statements commending the US Department of Energy (DOE) and Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) for two community-based cleanup proposals. Working together with federal, state and local agencies, BNL has announced proposals to clean its radioactive graphite research reactor and remove mercury-laden sediment from the Peconic River.

Both proposals are still in draft phase, and neither will be implemented until they receive community input.

"I am pleased that local families will not have to wait 87,000 years wondering about the safety of their drinking water," Bishop said, referring to a December proposal from DOE to seal off the reactor for 87,000 years. "These proposals demonstrate a real partnership between Brookhaven National Lab and the community to protect our environment."

"This continues to move BNL into the 21st century," Schumer said. "On the one hand they are fixing what's left over from the past to make Brookhaven clean and safe. On the other, BNL can now continue to be a jobs center for Long Island and a research center for the nation."

"I am pleased that Brookhaven has come to the table with an offer of assistance," Clinton said. "This is certainly a good announcement, not only for the community but for the environmental health of Long Island. We owe this much to the residents and to future generations of Long Islanders— 87,000 years is too long to wait for safe drinking water and a safe living environment."

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The proposals are the result of months of meetings between BNL, DOE, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NY Department of Environmental Conservation, NY Department of Health, and Suffolk County Health Services. Tonight, the proposals will be shared with BNL's Community Advisory Council (CAC), which is comprised of local groups.

The proposal for the radioactive graphite research reactor would remove more than 99 percent of the radiological material. It calls for removing the pile, biological shield, and fuel canal structure outside of the building along with all reasonably accessible soils. Bishop and Congressman Steve Israel had called an emergency meeting of the CAC in December of last year after learning that one of DOE's proposals called for sealing off the reactor. Bishop and Israel had called for a long-term solution to clean the reactor.

The proposal for the Peconic River would completely remove sediment layers in areas with high mercury, which produces dangerous methylmercury. The mercury is primarily located at two sites-from the Lab's eastern boundary to Schultz Road, a distance of approximately 1.5 miles and an additional 2.4 acres along Manor Road about 3 miles away. The sediment will be dried and shipped to an approved, off-site landfill. The sediment will be dried and shipped to a State Subtitle D landfill.

"I am pleased that, working in cooperation with the community and county agencies, BNL is set to embark on an action plan that will result in the thorough clean-up of contaminated structures and soils at its graphite research reactor," Levy said. "I look forward to continuing to work with BNL and all of the interested parties to implement this cleanup plan, as well as to thoroughly remediate contaminated sections of the Peconic River and contaminated groundwater located in the area of the BGRR."

Both proposals would also involve long-term monitoring to make sure that the substances in question were properly taken care of. The proposals will go through a community review process and implementation will hopefully begin in late-Summer or Fall of this year.

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